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**STATEMENT**

**DELIVERED BY**

**H. E. MRS. TUMUSIIME RHODA PEACE,**  
**COMMISSIONER FOR RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE**  
**AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

**ON THE OCCASION OF**

**THE OFFICIAL LAUNCHING OF**  
**THE TOGO NATIONAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME**  
**FOR**  
**AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY**

**HELD AT**  
**NOTSE, TOGO**

**09 FEBRUARY 2012**

- Your Excellency, **Mr Gilbert Houngbo**, Prime Minister Republic of Togo
- Honourable Members of the Council of Ministers
- Representatives of other African Member States
- Representatives of other Pan African Institutions
- Our development partners
- Members of the Consular and Diplomatic Corps
- Other invited Guests

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

1. Let me first of all present to His Excellency President Faure Gnassingbe and the People of the Republic of Togo the warm compliments of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H. E. Dr Jean Ping and his best wishes for the landmarks crowned by the launching of the National Investment Programme for Agriculture and Food Security of Togo. Dr Ping has not been able to attend in person due to other pre-arranged engagements that he was unable to reschedule.
2. Our appreciation to the Government and people of Togo for the warm reception and hospitality accorded the delegation of the African Union since our arrival in this beautiful country. We would like to commend the Government's initiative to have brought this important occasion to the door-step of farming communities to acknowledge and encourage their efforts as the heart of Togo's National Investment Programme for Agriculture and Food Security.
3. I would like to extend hearty congratulations to the dynamic and visionary leadership of Togo for the dedication to the worthy cause

of a food-secure Africa. I salute the courage of the farming communities and the agriculture sector as a whole and all our technical and financial partners that are contributing towards addressing the challenges of hunger, food insecurity and poverty in Togo.

4. It was in 2009 that Togo demonstrated leadership in committing the nation to the core principles of CAADP through the signing of the first National CAADP Compact in West Africa. In this vanguard role, it is clear that the Government has taken the content of the Togolese CAADP Compact beyond words to concrete actions of intensification, diversification, professionalization and capacity building beginning with the three priority projects. Furthermore, Togo did all Africa proud by demonstrating convincing eligibility for the Global Agricultural and Food Security Programme Funds thus making it one of the first beneficiaries of the funds arising out of the L'Aquila G8 Meeting of 2009.

**Your Excellency,**

5. The Commission is particularly encouraged by your enthusiasm and clear demonstration of Political Will at the highest level in support of well formulated and coordinated agricultural policies and programmes in Togo.

For Africa, these exemplary and laudable efforts are more imperative now than ever before considering the increasing demand for food and nutrition with the rising population amidst production-related challenges.

6. I would like to seize this opportunity to assure you that at the continental level, a lot of effort has been placed on the CAADP agenda since 2003. Within the last decade, Africa has chosen to take its common destiny in its own hands with a reaffirmation of commitment to increase agricultural production, productivity, food and nutrition security thereby combating hunger, malnutrition and poverty, and, indeed, contributing to the attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGS).
  
7. What we are witnessing today is the celebration of the wisdom of African leaders and, indeed, with the support and dynamism of our farming communities, other stakeholders, civil society and private sector, technical and financial partners. Coming to its tenth year on implementation, next year, since Maputo Summit of African Heads of State and Government, we have all worked very hard to move the Continental blueprint on agricultural development forward. Especially in the last three years, Africa has recorded significant increase in the number of countries that have signed CAADP Compacts. As at today, we have thirty AU Member States that are now aligned with the CAADP initiative in terms of both signing the compacts and increasing budgetary allocations to the agricultural sector. It is no wonder, therefore, that despite the global economic and financial downturn coupled with challenges posed by climate change, Africa's agriculture has continued to grow at impressive rates. We are now at a phase where we need all hands to push this agenda forward in terms of implementing the NAIP and we are glad to note that Togo maintained its position within the ranks of the champions of CAADP.

8. Your Excellency, the African Union identifies with you and the entire Togolese population in your sustained efforts for agricultural development of Togo. On our part, we will do everything within our ability to support the successful implementation of your National Agricultural Investment Programmes. We are aware that such an endeavour at the country level also calls for stronger commitment on the side of our partners. Let me now use this occasion to invite all our technical and financial partners to step up their efforts in support of this remarkable momentum. We welcome every contribution that moves us towards realizing our goal of a poverty-free, food and nutrition-secure Africa. We will continue to engage at various fora including the forthcoming CAADP Partnership Platform in Nairobi, the G8 in Chicago and the G20 in Mexico, among other avenues.
  
9. I am happy to have been a witness to the signing of the first West African CAADP Compact here in Togo in 2009 and to also be present here today at the auspicious official launch of Togo's National Investment Programmes for Agriculture and Food Security. The event of today is eloquent testimony to our mutual consent to work together for the prosperity of the African continent and its peoples who predominantly depend on agriculture for their livelihoods.
  
10. Let me, at this juncture, briefly mention that in the wider context of Africa's common position on the Agriculture-Climate Change nexus and in the run-up to the Rio+20, **Development** and **Sustainable livelihoods** remain our priorities. As we officially commemorate the launching of Togo's Agricultural Investment

Plan, we need to embrace climate-proof approaches and also support the principles of **Climate-Smart Agriculture** as a way of strengthening resilience of our farming communities.

10. Establishing the obvious linkages between agriculture and climate change is not far-fetched. Our agriculture, which is 90% rain-fed, is highly dependent on climate variability and so, the threat of climate change is real in Africa. For example, it is forecasted that by 2020, in Africa alone between 250 and 750 millions of people will be exposed to increased water stress as a result of climate change. While it is further projected that yields from rain-fed agriculture could be reduced by 50 percent within the coming decade. Most importantly due to climate change, expected crop net revenues could fall as much as 90% by 2100 and further aggravate the poverty levels.

11 It is relevant therefore to acknowledge that, climate change, which is taking place at a time of increasing demand for food, fuel, fiber and feed, has the potential to irreversibly damage the natural resource base on which agriculture depends.

I must state that with the spirited efforts like those championed by the Government and people of Togo, we are confident that these challenges will be surmounted and the intended goals will be attained.

14. Please accept Your Excellency our hearty congratulations once again as you take this bold stride here in Togo that reverberates all across Africa. You can count on the African Union Commission, as the premier Pan African Institution, to solidly back up your laudable

initiatives, programmes and projects in the framework of the National Investment Plan for Agriculture and Food Security.

15. I thank you for your attention.